

10 April 2020

Easter Friday

Ps John Bendixen (WTB)

Scripture Reference: 1 Corinthians 2:12-13 (AMPC); 1 Corinthians 10:15-17 (AMPC); 1 Corinthians 2:12 (NKJV)

Welcome to Easter Friday morning service. What a strange set of circumstances we find ourselves in that on an Easter Friday morning, Easter weekend that's celebrated by so many Christians around the world that on this particular Easter, there are no church services that are happening in many countries in the world and many places where church-going Christians would flock to church on an Easter Friday morning, the Easter weekend. Many, many Christians would actually go to great lengths to get to church and even though they may not even go to church during the year much and very often, Easter is like one of those times in the year where the death and the resurrection of Christ are recognised. The death and the resurrection of Christ are celebrated and there is a great awakening amongst people or a great recognition amongst people that they want to go into church and they want to recognise their Saviour or the God that is the great Almighty God and Jesus Christ and what He has done.

It's almost like one of those moments in people's lives where if you get to Easter Friday and you can go to church on Easter Friday, in some religions, it's the one thing that can keep you going in your year, in your life because you get to have a moment with God. What a strange moment we find ourselves in, what a strange time that this is all happening, and no one is going to church. The time is here, and no one or very many people are not going to church, because they can't. Whole countries, cities, towns, communities are in lockdown and in many, many places around the world people are prohibited from actually meeting together in public places and social distancing is being exercised; strange times indeed.

I speak to you today because there is one thing that we can count on in celebrating the life of Jesus. We can count on the blood of Jesus. We can count on the death of Jesus, the resurrection of Jesus, the power of God that raised Christ Jesus from the dead which if we believe in that, brings us to new life. This is not about us living our lives as perfectly as Jesus did, this is about believing that Jesus is Lord, Jesus died for us, Jesus shed His blood for us and because He was perfect, He was the Lamb of God that was slain and because He was perfect, God the Father raised Him up from the dead, and because of Him raising Him up from the dead, we who are on the earth right now, if we believe in Jesus and accept Him as our Lord and Saviour, we can have salvation eternally through our belief in Him, not in our perfection, but certainly our belief in Him. Which brings me to a passage of scripture I want to read to you today and it's from 1 Corinthians chapter 2 and I read verse 12, **¹²Now we have not received the spirit, and the Amplified Bible says, [that belongs to] the world, but the [Holy] Spirit Who is from God, [given to us] that we might realise and comprehend and appreciate the gifts [of divine favour, this is so that we can appreciate the gift of divine favour, the gift of blessing so freely and lavishly], pours upon us and has bestowed, the scripture says, bestowed on us by God (1 Corinthians 2:12 AMPC).**

We have not been given the spirit that is the same spirit of the world. In other words, people that are living in humanity that don't believe that Jesus Christ is the Lord, maybe they will say, "I believe Jesus is God," maybe they will even say that they believe that Jesus died for them. But maybe they don't believe Him as their personal Saviour. There are many people in the world that say that Jesus was a prophet. There are many people in the world that say Jesus was a good man, many even say that perhaps He was even the Son of God. But I'm talking to those that have made Jesus personal, Lord and Saviour that He's my Lord and He's my Saviour. I'm talking to those people today. If you're not one of them I encourage you to pray a simple prayer, and that simple prayer would be; Jesus, I recognise you as Lord and Saviour. I ask you to forgive me for not believing that till now, and come and live in my heart and change me and save me from this very spirit of the world and that I might receive the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ to salvation.

If you want to pray that prayer you can do so. Very simple, very easy, it's not complicated. The major thing is you believe it in your heart and you speak it with your mouth. Now to you who have prayed that, to you who is a believer, I want to say that we have not received the spirit of the world but we have received the Holy Spirit and He has given us gifts and He has given us blessing in Jesus.

This is a moment in time where we have come together digitally to share the Word together in this very special time of Easter and because we have received the Holy Spirit because we have received Jesus, I now want to read to you from 1 Corinthians chapter 10 from verse 15 to 17 in the Amplified Bible, and he is now talking to you, you who have made Jesus Lord and Saviour, you who have received the Holy Spirit, you who now see more than just what natural men can see; not just those people that live naturally in the world, you who are Christians.

¹⁵ I am speaking as to intelligent (sensible) men. Think over and make up your minds [for yourselves] about what I say. [I appeal to your reason and your discernment in these matters.] ¹⁶ The cup of blessing, which is referred to [of wine at the Lord's Supper], the cup of blessing, upon which we ask [God's] blessing, does it not mean that in drinking it] we participate in and share a fellowship (a communion) in the blood of Christ (the Messiah)? (1 Corinthians 10:15-16 AMPC). He is saying to these people and I say to you today, is this not a moment that I can appeal to your intelligence, sensibility? Does it not make sense that if we all participate in the cup of blessing which is the blood of the Lord Jesus as reflected in communion, the blood of the Lord Jesus, that by us participating in the blood of the Lord Jesus, we have a communion, we are commonly connected, we are commonly in union, connected in Jesus.

He goes on to say; the bread which we break, does it not mean that in eating it we participate and share a fellowship, a communion of the body of Christ. We share a fellowship in the blood of Christ and we share a fellowship in the body of Christ when we have communion and when we drink and when we eat of the bread. Do we not share in the blood, do we not share in the body of the Lord Jesus Christ? Verse seventeen says **¹⁷ For we [no matter how] numerous we are, we are one body,**

because we all partake of the one Bread, [the One Who the communion bread represents] (1 Corinthians 10:17 AMPC).

I want to just talk to you for a few moments that even though we are in a moment of lockdown where we are in this moment of separateness, where we are in this time of being away from each other, and actually we are prohibited by law - certainly in our country - we are prohibited by law from gathering together. We are prohibited by law from meeting together. In this time we are still one body. In this time we are still in fellowship. In this time we still have one common union that common union is because of the blood of Jesus. That common union is because of the body of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, this becomes extremely important for us when we read this passage of scripture because as I got to read to you from the previous scripture in Corinthians, ¹² **We have received not the spirit of the world, but we have received the Spirit Who is from God (1 Corinthians 2:12 NKJV).**

This Spirit that we have received from God is because we have a common union, it's because we are commonly connected in union with the blood and with the body of the Lord Jesus. In our union with Him, we function as a body. Even though in these moments we are separated, we are still united together.

The next verse 13, says ¹³ **And we are setting these truths forth in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the [Holy] Spirit, combining and interpreting spiritual truths with spiritual language [to those who possess the Holy Spirit] (1 Corinthians 2:13 AMPC).** This is a truth that is not received by just the intellect of man. This is not truths that are set out by human wisdom. These are truths that are taught by the Holy Spirit, combining and interpreting truths with spiritual language.

There are people that approach the Easter time, and often times I have observed over many years, people will receive an Easter time period as a holiday time. This is a vacation time. This is a time when families get together. And so although Easter is really set aside as a time where people really should be giving consideration to the death and the resurrection of Jesus and what it means to them, for the most part over many, many years, Easter has been a time of holiday, it's been a time of vacation, it's been a time of 'let's get out and unwind, and go to places and enjoy time out from work, time out from the city life perhaps, or go down to a coastal resort, or go to someplace where you can unwind and relax.

This lockdown has forced us to kind of take a pause. This lockdown, this social distancing, as people have called it, this inability for the Church to gather together, this inability of people to even socialise together, has given us pause. It's time to really think about what does this mean? Why do we not take this perhaps a little more seriously every year? In some ways, I'm delighted that I can talk to you this way, because the social distancing, prohibition of meeting together puts you in your home. Yes, you can be doing many other things. I'm trusting and believing that you're listening to me right now, but it certainly just puts a spotlight on what do you do every Easter? We should be celebrating spiritual truths that are received by spiritual people, spiritual people that have spiritual sense, pure spiritual people that

have spiritual recognition and understanding. This is not a way out, stupid thing to be considering. After all, we have life because of the life of Jesus. We have life because He died because His blood was shed because His body was broken for us because together we are much stronger together. The Bible says, one can put a thousand to flight, two can put ten thousand to flight. As a body that is united in union together with Jesus, we have tremendous authority and tremendous power.

I am going to conclude my message by saying; these moments that we are facing in our time in history, in this particular setting that we find ourselves with a pandemic that is threatening not only our health and our physical well-being. I believe the greater threat is still unseen to us, the greater threat is still lying ahead. It's a threat of survival economically, it's the threat of people not having sufficient capacity or capability. There's no work, there's no money to be made. There's no food, there is a greater threat of chaos happening in the earth than there has ever been before because of the economic potential downside of what's happening.

I want to say to you believer, this is not a time for you to pause and walk away from God and to say, "I'm just going to let it, whatever is going to be will be. Let the governments decide, and let the governments take charge, and let the governments decide when the lockdown's going to stop." No, believer, this is a time for us to begin to rise up and make a positive stand that together as one union in His body and in His blood we begin to speak to the future and we begin to speak as tithers, as covenant children of the Most High God. United in the local body in the Church of the Lord Jesus we begin to speak. We being to speak that as a group of people we will become the light. We will become the hope, we will bring and continue to bring day after day a message of hope, a message of life, a message that in Jesus we have answers.

Now church, if you go out there and you go into the world around you and you just speak the same things that everybody is saying, then you go back to what I was saying in the other scripture in Corinthians. 1 Corinthians 10, that we are not as those that are of the world, but we are those that are born of the Spirit. Sorry, that is in 1 Corinthians chapter 2, ¹² **We have received not the spirit of the world (1 Corinthians 2:12, NKJV)**. Please, don't go and speak as one who has the spirit of the world. Do not think as one who has the spirit of the world. Do not continue to live as one who has the spirit of the world. You are one who has the gift of Jesus Christ, the Messiah. You have been given that gift of spiritual blessing. Freely, divine favour has been given to you. Speak divine favour. Live out divine favour.

Well, you might say, "Well, Pastor John, I'm in the same position as other people that are in the world. I have lost my job," or, "I have lost my company," or, "I've lost my financial momentum and I'm now in a very difficult position." That may be real, that may be fact, but that is not truth. You have to speak the truth of who you are in Christ, not what your facts are saying about you. Because when you speak as everybody else speaks, well, then you're going to get the same results that everybody else gets. I don't want to get the same results. I want God's results for me right now.

I need, this is a time when I need to believe that Jesus did die for me. He did shed His blood for me and through that covenant of His death and resurrection, I have a whole new life. The Word says behold old things have passed away; all things have been made new. How? I have become a new creature in Christ Jesus. I am not of the old way. I am of a new way. I have been made a separate people. I've become a holy priesthood unto God and that means that God takes care of me. I must believe that. I must stand on that. I must believe that His blood is something that I can stand behind for my well-being, for my prosperity, for my spiritual blessing, for my mental strength, the well-being, the peace of my soul. I can stand behind the death, the breaking of His body, so that I can maintain healing and strength and physical well-being in a time when there's an onslaught against the health and the wealth and the well-being of people in the material world all around the world.

This is a moment, church, for us to be united and speak strength. Speak well-being and call. I want you to call upon the name of the Lord. Call upon your Messiah, your Saviour. Call upon His name, that name that is above every other name, call upon it and say, "I call upon the name of the God of prosperity, my increase, my *Jehovah Jireh*, my *EI Shaddai* that's more than enough for me. I call upon *Jehovah-Rapha* Who is my healer, the One Who heals me and protects me. I call upon the One that is my banner, that protects me and overshadows me. I call upon Him. I call upon the names of the Lord Jesus Christ."

Call upon Him. And say "I call upon You, the one that is taking care of me, the Great I Am that is above everything, because of Your blood, because of Your body that was broken for me. I call upon it. Now as I call, I speak boldly as a son of God. I speak boldly that healing is my portion, health is my portion, physical and material well-being in this world is my portion.

I speak boldly that because I'm a tither, I'm part of the body of Christ, I'm committed and connected to the body. I command the windows of Heaven to open as I am in agreement with Jesus. I command the blessing to be poured out. I command that the devourer is rebuked in the name of Jesus, and that no weapon formed against me, no weapon formed against my family, no weapon formed against my world and my future will prosper. He gives His angels charge over us. Me and my family, as for us, we will serve the Lord. We will worship the Most High God."

I pray, and I declare, that you will rise up in spirit, that you will rise up in strength, and you will begin to say, "We are Christian. We are Christ-like. We are of a whole new generation of people. We are the body of Christ. We are strong. We are united. We are favoured and blessed of the Most High God. We will make it through. We will increase with supernatural increase, and we will look for those new doors that are opening for us in this season."

If you need healing in your body, right now as I'm closing this service, and we're about to sing a song about the blood of Jesus; as we're singing this song, and maybe perhaps directly afterwards, you want to just, even if it's a cold drink or some water, get some bread, break bread and have communion, with maybe some of your

loved ones. If you are in that place, just go and remember the Lord's death, remember His resurrection, and receive your healing.

If you need financial breakthrough, receive it now in the name of Jesus. Receive it now. If you need any kind of intervention by God in your life, in these moments, receive it now.

This is the moment for us to believe that Jesus is our Lord, Jesus is our Master, Jesus is our Saviour, and He is the One who is the Great I Am that stands for us in everything and everywhere.

Thank you for joining me in this live stream service today, online service, and may the Holy Spirit bless you. May His anointing come upon you, and may His peace rest upon you in Jesus' name.

Please enjoy the new worship song that we are going to enjoy together right now. Thank you and God bless you.